

Mentoring

A mentor is an experienced, trusted adviser and practitioner. If you are likely to be self employed, particularly as an artist or craftsperson, then mentoring can be especially useful. Essentially it is a professional in your field who is able to gently steer you through the early stages of setting up, offer helpful guidance, oversee the quality of your output.

A good mentor is a friend and critic who is able to take the long view of your career development. He or she may advise on certain details – who to approach for help or sales, how to raise the level of critical appraisal of both the ideas and the physical output, and how to deal with the business side of things.

Generally you will only meet up at the beginning and then follow through over a twelve month period with a couple of progress meetings. It is informal, unless externally funded, and seen as good practice by many creative people.

Finding a Mentor

It will be up to you to identify someone who is willing to act as your mentor after you have left college. Ideally it will be someone who is established and knows 'the ropes', who will steer you clear of the many pitfalls of the early days. Someone fairly local to where you are based is best, who is willing to spend just a little of their time to help. Basically it is a matter of identifying an individual in your field whose work you admire and appreciate, and making an approach to see if they will be willing to undertake the role of mentor.

There are also peer mentoring groups which are set up to share problems and seek solutions within the creative industries. See [Creative Capital](#) for an example of how this works in London. Look also at [Artquest](#) for downloadable guidelines on setting up a peer mentoring group.